

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WIN HEAVILY IN DANISH ELECTIONS

SUMMARY. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, WHOSE POLICIES OVER THE LAST
TWO YEARS HAVE LARGELY BEEN IN HARMONY WITH THOSE OF THE
US, WON HEAVILY IN YESTERDAY'S ELECTIONS. THE VICTORY WAS
ALSO A PERSONAL TRIUMPH FOR PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN.
THE NEW PARLIAMENTARY CONSTELLATION STRENGTHENS THE CENTER
AND IMPROVES PROSPECTS FOR THE EARLY CONCLUSION OF A NEW
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DEFENSE AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. YESTERDAY'S (FEB 15) DANISH GENERAL ELECTIONS RESULTED
IN SUBSTANTIAL GAINS BY ANKER JORGENSEN'S GOVERNING SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS AND A HEAVY LOSS BY THE LIBERALS. MORGENS GILSTRUP'S
PROGRESSIVES EMERGED AS THE SECOND LARGEST PARTY IN PARLIA-
MENT WITH, HOWEVER, ONLY 26 SEATS TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

65 OF THE 179 TOTAL. ELEVEN PARTIES WERE RETURNED. 88.6 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE VOTED.

2. THE ADVANCE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS A STRENGTHENING OF DANISH "SOCIALISM". QUITE THE CONTRARY. THE CHARACTER OF THE NEW FOLKETING IS ONE OF A FORTIFIED CENTER AND EARLIER FORECASTS OF SIGNIFICANT INCREASES ON BOTH EXTREMES OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM DID NOT MATERIALIZE.

3. THE RETURNS ARE BEING WIDELY HERALDED AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE POLICIES AND PARTIES OF THE "AUGUST (76) COMPROMISE." THIS COMPROMISE PROVIDES FOR A STRINGENT INCOMES POLICY WITH EMPHASIS ON A 2 PERCENT ANNUAL LIMIT ON WAGE INCREASES AND MORE TAXES TO CURB CONSUMPTION, INFLATION AND IMPORTS. VIGOROUS MEASURES AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT WILL ALSO BE TAKEN. IN ADDITION TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, THE AUGUST COMPROMISE INCLUDED THE RADICALS, CENTER DEMOCRATS AND CHRISTIANS. ALTHOUGH NOT PART OF THE COMPROMISE ITSELF, THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE SUPPORTED IT.

4. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GAINS ALSO REPRESENT A PERSONAL TRIUMPH FOR PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN AND MUST BE REGARDED AS A CULMINATION OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIS IMAGE AS A LEFT-LEANING EX-LABOR BOSS OF LIMITED HORIZON TO THAT OF A RESPONSIBLE DANISH STATESMAN.

5. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 1968-71 PERIOD, THE WAY APPEARS TO BE OPEN FOR A KIND OF "MAJORITY" GOVERNMENT. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER THIS MIGHT COME ABOUT THROUGH AN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTUAL COALITION OR BY MEANS OF A FORMAL WORKING AGREEMENT AMONG THE AUGUST COMPROMISE PARTIES, INCLUDING THE CONSERVATIVES. IN ANY CASE, THERE WILL BE NEW FACES IN GOVERNMENT AND SOME SORT OF A CABINET RESHUFFLE WILL CERTAINLY OCCUR. IT WILL BE RECALLED, HOWEVER, THAT ANKER JORGENSEN CALLED THE ELECTIONS WITHOUT RESIGNING. HE AAD HIS PRESENT TEAM SIMPLY STAY IN PLACE, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, WITH NO FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL FORMALITIES REQUIRED.

6. AS WE INDICATED EARLIER, DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY QUESTIONS WERE HARDLY TOUCHED ON DURING THE CAMPAIGN. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PROMISE OF A STABLE GOVERNMENT, WITH THE WILL AND APPARENT BACKING TO TAKE THE NECESSARY HARD UNPOPULAR ECONOMIC DECISIONS, IS A PLUS FOR THE UNITED STATES. FURTHERMORE, IT ALSO APPEARS THAT IN SPITE OF HEAVY LOSSES BY THE LIBERALS THE NEW CONSTELLATION IN PARLIAMENT WILL ENHANCE THE CHANCES OF OBTAINING A REASONABLE NEW MULTI-YEAR DEFENSE AGREEMENT.

7. SEPTTEL PROVIDES DETAILS OF ELECTION RESULTS.

DEAN

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